

HUMAN RESOURCES/HUMAN RIGHTS DEPARTMENT

Fiscal Year 2011

Human Rights

The focus of the Human Rights Department continues to be directed toward training Town employees on issues of diversity, sensitivity, and social justice in the workplace. The Social Justice Project focused its mission on having the Town look at its policies and practices and recognized that an individual's health is largely determined by their social identity (race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, language or religion). It should be the Town practice to create policies and activities for Amherst that increases awareness of these issues, improves access to resources for all people, and eliminates differences in health outcomes so that all are equally served.

During the tenure of the Social Justice Project there were many accomplishments:

The formation of a Social Justice committee.

Trainings:

Social Justice Health Equity Training Workshops for the following:

- Senior Level Officials
- Town of Amherst Community Members
- Town Employees, Amherst Residents
- Amherst Community Organizations
- Town of Amherst Select Board
- Amherst Regional Public schools Administration and Staff.

Town employees were given release time to participate in the dialogue process and trainings.

Employee Social Justice Health Equity weekend Intensive Retreat

One employee is turning this experience into a 3 credit hour course by collaborating with their department of study at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Dr. Love by using all the trainings and weekend retreat contact hours toward a Masters Degree requirement.

Collaboration between Town Departments and Community

Social Justice Award Ceremony honoring Collaborative work with twenty three entities including Town departments, organizations, and businesses

Town of Amherst EBT Program Collaborations with the Planning Department, Public Health Department and the Human Rights/Human Resources Department, the Chair of the Agricultural Commission, and local farmers to work on making all Amherst Farmers Markets accessible and affordable to low income families by establishing an EBT program at the Amherst Winter and Summer Farmers' Markets.

The purchasing of Wireless EBT/Credit/Debit Machines- for the use of the Town of Amherst Farmer Markets.

Olympia Drive “Breath Easy Units”- multiple departments worked with Developers to create a percentage of housing units in Olympia Drive housing “Breath Easy Units”.

Collaboration with Community Organizations – for the following:

Community Dialogues
Screening of Unnatural Causes at Amherst Cinema
“Town of Amherst Family Fun Day”.

“Town of Amherst Family Fun Day” –LSSE, Fire, Police, Health and Human Rights/Human Resources worked with the community members, restaurants, and the community entities to organize and host this successful one day event at Groff Park.

Dialogues

Increased Morale – Among employee dialogue and training participants.

Changed Perspective- The community views the Town in different perspective as a result of the Social Justice and Health Equity work.

Need to Discuss Issues Regarding Health Equity and Social Justice-Qualitative and quantitative results that indicate the following:

The community is restless and has a need to discuss issues regarding health equity and social justice.
The community is willing to organize and work to facilitate policy change surrounding health equity and social justice.
Health disparities in the community are linked to social determinants of health.

Town Wide Conversations-about poverty, class, race, and gender issues in the Town of Amherst.

There were more complaints and drop-ins from citizens with issues regarding civil rights violations, harassment and other discrimination issues this year since the relocation of the Human Rights office to Town Hall in 2007. The Commission continues its efforts toward being more proactive and visible in the community. There were 7 complaints from citizens and Town employees combined for FY 11. One complaint required a short investigation.

The call volume increased regarding alleged, civil rights violations, and there were information and referrals made.

Human Resources

Personnel Board

The Personnel Board currently is in full membership, comprised of five members. Four members are appointed by the Select Board, one of which is by nomination from the employees covered by the policies; and the fifth member is appointed by the Library trustees. Each

member serves a three-year term. All members must be residents of Amherst. The Board usually meets monthly with the Select Board liaison, Town Manager and Human Resources Staff.

The major focus of the Board during the year was to review and revise the Personnel Procedures Manual and to bring the revision to the Select Board for their approval.

The Human Resources Department (HRD) provides a variety of services to Town employees to ensure that the needs of the Town are met by responding to staffing needs and managing the hiring process through recruitment, advertisement and administering exams, as needed. The Human Resources Department meets with the Personnel Board and collaborates on issues regarding personnel policies and procedures, to assure equitable treatment of employees by supporting the different departments with the administration of policies and procedures as they relate to Human Resources. The Personnel Board met eight times during FY 11.

The Human Resources Department continues to communicate to employees through the annual open enrollment process, benefit programs, and policies. The annual re-enrollment was successfully completed for health insurance. There was no increase in employee health insurance for 2011 however there was a change in co-pays. The HRD coordinated employee meetings with the Town Manager to share information, and assist in grievances and resolutions. The new hire checklist and orientation procedures were updated. HRD also manages the Workers Compensation Benefit Program and assists the different departments with assessing HR needs.

We are currently in the process of implementing a paperless system for all of our employee personnel related actions, including new hires and salary adjustments.

During 2010 contracts for union employees ended, and HRD began to participate in the re-negotiation of collective bargaining process. The HRD also assisted with contract management for union employees, and assisted the departments with implementing collective bargaining agreements, which assured compliance with all federal and state labor laws.

Trainings

There were a series of in-services trainings for Department heads: An update of sexual harassment and harassment in the workplace, and managing organizational change. Sexual harassment trainings were also conducted for Firefighters.

Personnel

The Town employed 300+ employees including part-time non-benefited and summer help; 68 of which are non-union fully benefited employees.

Recruitment and Advertisement:

The online application process was implemented during the year. We also continue to recruit and advertise through: the Daily Hampshire Gazette, The Amherst Bulletin, Sentinel and, the Greenfield Recorder. Other forms of advertisement are done through the Career Options Resource Center- Hampshire College, Career Point, and UMass Career Services and website posting. There were a total of fourteen positions advertised for FY 11.

There were twelve new hires during the FY 11, two Police Patrolmen, two Firemen, and an Assistant Sanitarian in the Health Department, Land Manager in Conservation, two in DPW, two in Town Managers Office, two in the Library and 2 internal promotions in DPW.

Retirement, Resignations, Transfers, Military Leave, and Terminations for FY 11:

During the FY 11, 6 employees retired one employee was laid off, (four on Military Leave) and HRD received a total of 10 resignations and, one employee died.

# of Employees	Years of Service
1	40
4	25
10	30
5	20
5	15
14	10

22 Part-Time employees' with 10 years or more service

Respectfully submitted,

Eunice Torres,
Human Resources/Rights Director